

Message Text

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10
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USPS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 AID-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 /066 W
----- 014010

R 310552Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4934
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC
DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI/UDORN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 5060

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, LA
SUBJ: L'AFFAIRE DE TIMBRES

1. PHILATELICALLY MINDED EMBASSY PERSONNEL WERE PLEASED TO LEARN FROM NEWSPAPER XAT LAO ON JULY 26 THAT THE LAO GOVERNMENT WAS ABOUT TO PUT ON SALE A STAMP ISSUE COMMEMORATING THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL WITH PORTRIATS OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTS FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON THROUGH GERALD FORD. INQUIRIES AT THE POST OFFICE JULY 28 ELICITED THE RESPONSE THAT THE NEW SERIES WAS NOT YET AVAILABLE BUT SOON WOULD BE.

2. HOWEVER, THE JULY 29 XAT LAO CARRIED THE NEWS THAT THE EVER-VIGILANT "21 ORGANIZATIONS" HAD SENT A DELEGATION JULY 28 TO SEE THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PTT MINISTRY TO PREVENT THE COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE. THE NEW STAMPS WERE DESCRIBED AS "NOT NATIONALIST" AND "A PLOT BY THE CIA TO DESTROY LAO NATIONALISM."
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EVERYONE AT THE MINISTRY PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF THE GENESIS

OF THE ISSUE, BUT SITHAT KORINH, DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING AND STAMPS, DID STATE THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE ISSUE WAS TO EARN FOREIGN EXCHANGE (FROM COLLECTORS AROUND THE WORLD). IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE RELATED TO PTT MINISTER KHAMPHENG BOUPHA.

3. FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO BUY THE STAMPS AT THE POST OFFICE ON JULY 30 BROUGHT THE RESPONSE THAT NOT ONLY WERE THEY NOT ON SALE BUT THAT THOSE THAT HAD BEEN SOLD (TO WHOM WE DO NOT KNOW) WERE BEING CALLED BACK.

4. THE JULY 31 XAT LAO BROUGHT ON THAT KHAMMAN KHOUNPHAKDY, "LEADER OF THE PROTESTORS AT THE PTT MINISTRY" (APPARENTLY A PERMANENT POSITION), HAD MET WITH KHAMPHENG REGARDING THE MATTER. THE MINISTER AVOWED THAT HE WAS AGAINST THE PRINTING OF THE STAMPS AND PROMISED NOT TO PLACE THEM IN CIRCULATION. KHAMMAN WANTED THE PTT TO GO EVEN FURTHER AND: (A) BURN THE STAMPS BEFORE A SPECIAL COMMITTEE AND THE POPULATION (VIENTIANE'S FIRST AUTO-DA-FE); (B) CUT RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH COMPANY THAT PRINTED THE STAMPS; (C) END THE PRACTICE OF PRINTING STAMPS ABROAD; AND (D) OPEN AN INVESTIGATION TO DISCOVER THE "LACKEYS OF THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS" WHO WERE STILL IN THE PTT.

5. COMMENT: PGNU WILL NOW PRESUMABLY HAVE TO COMMEMORATE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL IN SOME OTHER WAY. WE MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THEY RETURN ALL OUR SEIZED PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS, BUT THEY MAY BE SAVING THAT GESTURE FOR OUR TRICENTENNIAL.
CHAPMAN

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